

Unc Moon, Mama, Daddy, Aunt Spoodle, Aunt Thread--remember? Everyybody ad flowers in the yard. But nobody had Four-o-clocks the way Jack Toussaint had them. Every day, four o'clock, they opened up just as pretty. Remember?"

"Why I kilt him? That's why. To protect them little flowers. But they ain't here no more. And how come? 'Cause Jack Toussaint ain't here nO more. He's back there under them trees with all the rest. With Aunt Thread, Aunt Spoodle, Aunt Clara, Mama, Daddy, Unc Moon, Unc Jerry--all the rest of them. But y'all do remember, don't y'all?" He turned to Glo. Glo sat there on the steps with her little grandchildren round her, Faye's children. Faye somewhere in Detroit. Johnny Paul, tall, picket-thin, looked down at Glo. His eyes red, watery, want somebody to understand him. "Remember the Palm-of-Christina in Thread's yard, Glo? Other people had them, but they didn't grown nowhere thick and dark like they did in her yard. You remember, Glo." Glo nodded. She smiled and nodded. She could see the tall shady palm-of-christians. We all could see them. "Remember Jack and Red Rider hitting that field every morning with them two mules, Diamond and Job? Remember, Mathu?" Mathu nodded. "Lord, Lord, Lord," Johnny Paul said. "Don't tell me you can't remember them early mornings when that sun was just coming up over there behind them trees? Y'all can't tell me yo'all can't remember how Jack and Red Rider used to race out into them field? On them old single slides. Both of them just teching that ground now and then to keep that slide steady. Hah! Tell me who could beat them two men plowiang a row, hanh? Jack with Diamond, Red Rider with Job, who could beat them, hanh? Who? I'm asking y'all who?"

"Nobody," Beulah said. "That's for sure. Not them two men. Them was men, them."

Johnny Paul nodded his head. Not to Beulah, he wasn't looking at her. He was looking away again, down the quarters toward the fields this time.

"Thirty, forty of us going out in the field with cane knives, hoes, plows--name it. Sunup to sundown, hard, miserable work, but we managed to get it done. We stuck together, shared what little we had here in the quarters, and loved and respected each other.

"But just look at things today. Where the people? Where the roses? Where the four-o-clocks? the palm-o-christians? Where the people used to sing and pray in church? ~~Under~~ I'll tell you where. Under them trees back there, that's where. And where they used to stay, the weeds got it now, just waiting for the tractor to come plow it up."

Johnny Paul had been looking down the quarters. He looked at Mapes now. The people_ all agreed with him, nodding saying yes to everything he said.

"That's something you can't see, Sheriff, 'cause you never could see it. You can't see Red Rider with Job and Jack with Diamond. You can't see wee the church with the people, and you can't hear the singing and the praying. You had to be here then to be able to don't see it and don't hear it now. But I was here then, and I don't see it now, and that's why I did it. I did it for them back there under them trees. I did it 'cause that tractor is getting closer and closer to that graveyard, and I was scared if I didn't do it, one day that tractor was go'n come in there and plow up them graves, getting rid of all the proof that we ever was. Like now they trying to get rid of all the proof that black people ever farmed this land with plows and mules--like if they had nothing from the start but motor machines. Sure, one day theyd will get rid of the proof that we ever was, but they ain't go'n do it while

I'm still alive. My ~~mama~~^{man} and ~~daddy~~^{paw} worked too hard in these fields. They ~~mama~~^{man} and they ~~daddy~~^{paw} worked too hard in these same fields. They ~~mama~~^{man} and ~~they~~^{paw} daddy people people worked too hard, too hard to have that tractor just come in that graveyard and destroy all proof that they ever was. I'm the last one left. I had to see that the graves stayed for a little while longer. But I just didn't do it for my own pe ple, I did it for every last one back there under them trees. And i~~k~~ I did it for every four-o-clock, every rose bush, every palm-o-christian ever growad on this place."

He went over to the garden fence to stand by himself. The people stayed quiet. They said little things while he spoke--things like, " He know what he's talking 'bout." "That's the true." "I remember that well." But even when they said this, they said it quiet. Even Mapes was quiet. Mathu was still there n front of him. Candy not far from Mathu, and her boyfried, Lou, not far from her side. Jameson was at the end of the gallery, still think ng about Fixx, and hating us all. The children squirmed around on the steps, the way they would do in church, but all Glo had to do was look at them, and they'd get quiet again.

Mapes grunted. Not loud. Quiet. He was starting to feel wh~~at~~ was going on. He was starting to feel he couldn't do a thing about it yet. Yank spoke. Mapes looked down at Yank. Yoan~~k~~ was short, bowlegged, had been a cowboy in his younger days. Mapes looked down at him, but he didn't say, "Sure now." this time. Any other time he woulda said, "Sure, now," but ~~not~~ this time; he was starting to feel something..

"That's right," Yank said. "Anybody needed a horse brroke, they called on me. In the parish, out the parish, they called on me. Any time they needed a horse broke for a lady, they called Yank, 'cause they knowed I knowed my stuff. Lot of